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Navajo Nation Council approves NHA Reform Act of 2013

WINDOW ROCK – On Wednesday, the Navajo Nation Council approved the Navajo Housing Authority Reform Act of 2013, amending Title 6 of the Navajo Nation Code.

The initial legislation allowed the Navajo Nation President to appoint Commissioners to the NHA board with the Resources and Development Committee having the authority to confirm the selected candidates.

According to the legislation, if the President does not appoint a Commissioner within 60 days, then the oversight committee will select and confirm the candidate.

Legislation prime sponsor Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) said he hopes commissioners are selected and confirmed on a merit basis, adding that it is important that candidates possess qualifications and expertise in business practices and the housing industry.

“One of the main concerns regarding this legislation is whether or not RDC should have the authority to oversee the NHA board,” said Delegate Tsosie.

Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock) motioned for an amendment to replace the oversight committee from RDC to the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee.

Delegate Simpson’s amendment included 11 changes within the language of the legislation to replace RDC as oversight with the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee.

The Council voted 18-0 to pass the amendment.

Upon approval of the amendment, the Council expressed their support in allowing the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee to oversee the NHA board.

“I am glad this amendment passed because now it allows all delegates to advocate on behalf of their chapters and we can all have equal input regarding the NHA board,” said Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau).

Delegate Yazzie added that this legislation could open the doors for the Naabik'íyátí' Committee to become the oversight committee for other boards to allow each delegate to advocate on behalf of their chapters.

Other components of the legislation address basic qualifications, removal of commissioners, exercise of powers, and terms of office. It also states that at least three of the Commissioners will each reside in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

Council voted 21-0 to pass Legislation No. 0006-13.

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